

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 8-18 and 21 is noted with appreciation.

Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in order to reduce the issues. Claims 2, 4, and 10 have been amended to address the alleged informalities. In addition, Claim 15 has been revised to address the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Various editorial revisions have been made in the claims in order to place the application in better condition for issue.

Turning to the merits, independent Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Igarashi et al. (US 6,345,842 B1). Claim 2 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nomura et al. (US 6,631,924 B2).

Without acceding to the rejections, Claim 2 has been amended more particularly to define an impact absorbing type steering column apparatus with a vehicle body bracket having a vehicle body mounting portion, a vertical wall portion bent substantially in an L-shape from the vehicle body mounting portion through a bending portion, a column fastening/fixing portion, and a groove for adjusting the

position of the steering column and through which a fastening bolt is inserted. The groove is formed with a restricting portion for restricting positional adjustment of the steering column within a normal operating adjustment range. The groove also extends beyond the restricting portion and is open at an end, such that when a secondary collision occurs, movement of the fastening bolt together with the steering column is restricted by the restricting portion, the bracket is bent at the bending portion to absorb impact energy, and thereafter, the fastening bolt together with the steering column move beyond the restricting portion and are released from the bracket.

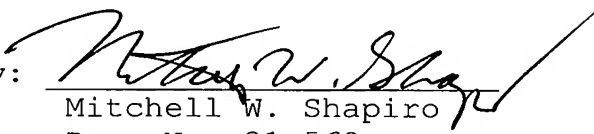
It is apparent that the applied references fail to disclose or suggest the presently recited features of Claim 2. In both references, normal tilt adjustment and steering column movement upon a secondary collision are accommodated by two separate elements, as compared to the single groove of Applicants' invention. Note, for example, that Igarashi shows elongate hole 59 for tilt adjustment and groove 57 for column movement upon a secondary collision (FIGS. 2 and 5). Similarly, these functions are accommodated in Nomura by tilt cams 121 and 123 and notch 117, respectively (FIGS. 10 and 12).

Accordingly, amended Claim 2 clearly distinguishes patentably from Igarashi and Nomura and should now be allowed, as, therefore, should its dependents.

In view of the amendments and remarks presented herein, Applicants respectfully request that this application now be passed to issue.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10231) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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